



Indian Education Newsletter



Billings Public Schools

Vol. 2 Issue 4

January, 2008



From the Indian Ed Office...

One morning an elderly man was walking on a nearly deserted beach. He came upon a boy surrounded by thousands and thousands of starfish. As eagerly as he could, the youngster was picking them up and throwing them back into the ocean. Puzzled, the older man looked at the young boy and asked, "Little boy, what are you doing?" The youth responded without looking up, "I'm trying to save these starfish, sir."

The old man chuckled aloud, and queried, "Son, there are thousands of starfish and only one of you. What difference can you make?" Holding a starfish in his hand, the boy turned to the man and, gently tossing the starfish into the water, said, "It will make a difference to that one!" The parable of the starfish is a popular story that teaches a lesson about not being overwhelmed by a situation, but instead, to focus

on an individual task at hand. Too often, educators see data that shows American Indian students not performing up to the level of non-Indians on standardized tests. We tend to overlook the individual in examining the data on Indian students. Improving the education experience of Indian students in Billings starts with one student. We can make a difference in the experience of Indian students in each Billings' classroom. Collectively, we can make a difference in improving the education experience of all Indian students in Billings Public Schools.



Urban Indian Education Forum

The Urban Indian Education Forum, held December 6-7, 2007 in Billings, brought together participants representing Great Falls, Helena, Butte, Havre and Billings Public Schools. The purpose of the forum was to bring educators working with American Indian students in the state's largest districts to share ideas and look at what the data shows in regards to urban Indian education. Organizers of the Forum, Dulce Whitford, Indian Education Specialist for the Great Falls Public Schools and Everall Fox, Director of Indian Education for the Billings Public Schools, wanted to begin a discussion that focused exclusively on issues facing Indian students in Montana's urban areas. Indian education gatherings have focused primarily on reservation schools. The Forum was an opportunity to share ideas and connect educators from around the state for future meetings and collaboration. Over seventy-five people participated in the two-day forum. Billings Public Schools Superintendent Jack Copps welcomed the participants by sharing his personal experiences in the education field. The first days' key note speakers included Dr. Janine Pease, Vice-President for American Indian Affairs at Rocky Mountain College, Mandy Smoker Broaddus, OPI Indian Education Achievement Specialist and Reno Charette,

Continued on page 3



Dull Knife —
Northern Cheyenne

Special points of interest:

- *OPI Indian Ed for All Curriculum Links*
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.*
- *American Indians and Historical Trauma*
- *Indian student Achievement Professional Development Stipends,*
- *American Indian Value Systems.*

Inside this issue:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Lewis & Clark Title VII</i> | 2 |
| <i>OPI Indian Ed for All Curriculum Links</i> | 2 |
| <i>Book Review: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian.</i> | 2 |
| <i>American Indians and Historical Trauma</i> | 3 |
| <i>Indian student Achievement Professional Development Stipends</i> | 3 |
| <i>American Indian Value Systems.</i> | 4 |

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Lewis and Clark Middle School Title VII



*Lewis & Clark
Toastmaster's
Club © Billings
Gazette*

Toastmasters

Lewis & Clark Indian club embarked on an historic journey with an invitation to the Trans Tower Toastmasters club. Our hosts were extremely gracious, clearly and thoroughly explaining the finer points of Toastmasters! As far as we can determine this is a 1st in

School Dist #2 history! We are excited and ready to develop great communicators within our club. Two members of our delegation won the Speaking awards given out at each mtg. We thought that exceptional for our first time out! Our visit was recorded in the Billings Gazette. If you would like your student to take part in this activity; call NOW! We begin on January 22d. **Drum Keepers.**

Indian Health Board of Billings has been sponsoring an After-School program for the past 3 years. Recently they purchased a full sized Traditional Drum and are now ready to start Instruction. Mr. Robert Ironmaker will be the instructor and already has 12 boys signed.

If you would like to become a Drum Keeper; we need you to sign immediately!

Junior Journalist Project.

NAYTV is ready to launch the TV Production project. Native American Youth Television is seeking to introduce students to the field of Video Journalism. Mr. Scott Prinzing will be our Head instructor and he is preparing to begin on January 8th. Meetings will be every Tuesday right after school and will end around 5:00 PM. We will include students from the other sections to test and display the skills they will be learning.

Curriculum Links on the OPI Indian Ed Website

The Curriculum Links page on the OPI website is a resource of sample lesson plans and ideas that have been developed by groups and organizations that fit with OPI's mission of implementing Indian Education for All in the classroom. To often, educators only scratch the surface with regards to looking at the OPI Indian Education website. There are great many sample lessons and resources listed on the pages. An example of some lessons that can be found on this page is entitled, "Culturally Competent K-12 Standards Based Math & Science Lessons". The lessons tie into Montana Content and Performance Standards,

as well as the Essential Understandings Regarding Montana's Indians. Also included is the "Cradleboard Project" from singer/songwriter Buffy St. Marie. Finally, a great resource for elementary teachers is the Northwest Regional Education Laboratories "Indian Reading Series".

These resources can be used in your classes or help teachers get an idea of how to design their own lessons. You can find these links and many others at:

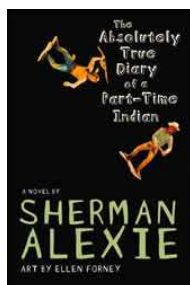
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/indianed/links.html>

"To often, educators only scratch the surface with regards to looking at the OPI Indian Education website."



Book Review: The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian

Seattle author Sherman Alexie (Spokane/Coeur d'Alene) latest book, "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian" (Little, Brown & Co.) was awarded the 2007 National Book Award for Young People's Literature by the National Book Foundation. It is a fictional account of a young American Indian student who attends an off-reservation school. Based on the author's own experi-



The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian
© Little, Brown & Co

ences growing up on the Spokane reservation, the book gives an honest view of life from an Indian perspective. The book deals mostly with the main character, Arnold "Junior" Spirit, and his decision to leave his school on the reservation to attend one that is located twenty-two miles from his home. Poignant, but hilarious at the same time, "Diary" provides an unflinching account of

Junior's struggles to deal with his own personal issues as well as those involving his family and community. The decision to leave the reservation school was met with resentment by his friends and community members. Along with the awkwardness of "being the only other Indian in the school besides the mascot", the book explores Junior's transition from outsider to a student who is accepted by his new classmates and school. Recommended reading for teens and adults, "Diary" is available at Barnes and Noble.

American Indians and Historical Trauma

Recent research around how “Historical Trauma” impacts Indian education today may shed some light on how schools can begin to understand how to work to improve the education experience of American Indian students. Historical Trauma is “the collective emotional and psychological injury both over the life span and across generations, resulting from a cataclysmic history of genocide”. It has a layering effect, beginning with the arrival of the European to the Americas. Historical or inter-generational trauma is similar to that suffered by the Jewish people as a result of the Holocaust, the Japanese Americans interned in California at the beginning of World War II

and African Americans suffering the aftermath of slavery. It was further exacerbated with the establishment of the reservation system which brought rapid change to how Indians lived. The disruption of the natural order to the nuclear and extended families among Indians as a result of forced removal to boarding schools resulted in a generation of Indians who were directly impacted by the effects of the boarding school era. Family roles and relationships were disrupted. The chain of Native language acquisition and the teaching of tribal culture to the younger generations was disrupted. Traumatic experiences, both physical and emotional, scarred several generations of Indians

who attended boarding schools. These effects were as a result of the lack of coping skills and access to appropriate counseling, compounding the effects of Historical Trauma. As a result, many Indians from this era subsequently passed on the effects of the trauma unwittingly to subsequent generations of their own families. Many of the problems facing Indian students and families can be related directly towards the effects of Historical Trauma.

Brave Heart, M.Y.H. (2004) *Incorporating native historical trauma content* in Gutierrez, L., Zuniga, M., & Lum, D. *Education for Multicultural Social Work Practice*, (pp. 201-211). Alexandria, VA: Council on Social Work Education

Urban Indian Education Forum...continued

continued from page one

Coordinator of Native American Programs at MSU-Billings. The speakers discussed ways educators can support the education experience of Indian students. OPI Indian Education Division representatives spoke to the participants on the second day. Denise Juneau, Director of Indian Education, Mike Jetty, Indian Education Curriculum Specialist and Angie Collins, OPI Indian Education Grants Coordinator all shared information on Indian education achievement and Indian Education for All with attendees. One of the themes that several speakers addressed was to not focus on Indian

students a group, but look at them as individuals within your classroom. Too often, the data analysis tends to use the deficit model approach when discussing achievement issues related to Indian students. What is often overlooked is where progress is being made. Butte and Havre school districts were highlighted as districts that have shown American Indian students making AYP in math and reading assessments.

Organizers hope that this inaugural Forum will be the beginning of future discussions around the issues facing urban Indian education in Montana.

“Too often, the data analysis tends to use the deficit model approach when discussing achievement issues related to Indian students.”



Indian Student Achievement Professional Development Stipends

The achievement gap that exists in Montana between American Indian students and all other students is an area of great concern around the state and within the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). These unique stipends have been established to support districts and schools as they work to close the achievement gap through by focusing on data, research and identified needs.

Who is eligible? Montana public school educators who work with American Indian student populations are eligible. Priority will be

given to those who work either with schools that are in the Restructuring Phase of the AYP process or those who can demonstrate a significant achievement gap within their school. Professional development options should match the demonstrated need, which will play a significant role in selection of awardees.

For more information you may contact:

Mandy Smoker Broaddus
Office of Public Instruction
Achievement Specialist
(406)444-3013
mbroaddus@mt.gov



Room 216A
Lincoln Center
415 North 30th
Billings, MT. 59101

Phone: 406-247-3765
Fax: 406-247-3713
E-mail: foxe@billings.k12.mt.us



Indian Education for All — Closing the Achievement Gap for American Indian Students in Billings Public Schools.

We're on the Web!

<http://www.billingssschools.org/indian-education.htm>

Billings Public Schools Indian Education Office works to promote Indian Education throughout the District. The programs we oversee include:

- *Indian Education for All*
- *Title VII Indian Education*
- *American Indian Achievement*

Working in partnership with Billings teachers, administrators, parents and community, we can make a difference for American Indian students in Billings Public Schools.



American Indian Value Systems

Certain values are considered to be characteristic of specific American Indian tribes. This does not mean that all persons belonging to that tribe would display behavior that reflects those values, but rather that the culture as a whole ascribes to that value system. Generally the adherence to the value system can be described as a continuum ranging from those very traditional American Indians who behave completely according to the cultural value system to those American Indians who have become acculturated into the value system of the majority society. Sometimes American Indians adhere to traditional values that conflict with the predominant values of Euro-American society. All educators should learn that American Indians had and continue to have a distinct value system, the center of which is respect for the Creator, elders, family, community, Mother Earth and land. Respect is manifested through such behaviors as practicing traditions, learning language, listening,

cooperating, honoring elders, non-interference, showing patience and tolerance, acceptance, humor, humility, gratitude and respect for all living things. The study of the American Indian value system will assist educators in examining their own values and related behaviors. Cultural Content/American Indian World View American Indian cultural values are based on the spiritual belief system and oral teachings. Cultural values are ideals and establish cultural norms. All educators should be aware of these particular values if American Indian children are in the classroom. Some of the children's behaviors may reflect a value system different from what the teacher is accustomed to and may lead to a judgment that a student has learning difficulties or behavioral issues when, in fact, the child's behavior may simply reflect a different value system. Students may also behave in different ways in different circumstances. Many American Indian people are bi-cultural in that they display the behaviors associated with the majority

society when it is situation appropriate and display the cultural behaviors when among American Indians. Students may just be learning how to behave in a bi-cultural manner and teachers should be understanding of the conflicts which learners may be experiencing. Middle School students may experience a particular difficulty since it is an age when young people want to be like their peers while they are trying to establish their racial/cultural identity. Students are learning to walk in two worlds. In order to live in two different worlds the American Indian students learn the values of the majority population as behaviors and skills but do not necessarily internalize that value system. This dual approach is necessary for survival.

Excerpted from "American Indian Learner Outcomes". Retrieved from: <http://www.d.umn.edu/~abergstr/ailo/values.html>